

REWRITE



The Magazine of Effective Writing

Vol. XVI No. 4.

WINTER, 1956-7.

Fifty cents

"I HAVE FAILED. I JUST CAN'T WRITE!"

Almost every day we hear from some writer who is ready to quit or has actually thrown in the sponge. One wrote us recently saying that she desired recognition. She still wants it, but doubts that she will ever get it in this world. The question that always raises itself in my mind in such moments is whether she has explored every possible angle in her search. So many, many writers have merely been banging their heads against a wrong wall or door for them.

My first reaction in every instance is one of disbelief. For in my long experience it has become apparent that there is a niche somewhere for everyone capable of writing fairly decent English and with something in his heart or mind to say. The will to seek, and persistence in trying to meet the need however humble are the basic requirements.

Oh, yes, there is one other requirement, a difficult one to meet. It is humility, true humbleness of spirit and a willingness to be of service wherever the Giver of all gifts, the source of all energy decides you can be most useful. I have seen so many writers in my life who only wanted to write fiction or who spurned a check smaller than \$50. They wanted recognition, but not so badly they'd make a realistic attempt to capture it. The vanity of wishing to be a writer in the big magazines, or the need for money in large amounts that drove them to pursue a will-of-the-wisp dream was stronger than their supply of good, practical commonsense. For the latter would tell them surely that the best thing to do would be to write wherever they could get a foothold, and then gradually as they could change direction.

One has to be a realist above everything in this matter of serious writing. The competition is terrific. Slick magazine writing may or may not be very inspired writing according to the angle from which you look at it. But it is competent. You have got to get to be able to write well, and also be able ever to write with precision. To fill exactly the hole you are trying to fill. There can be no square pegs in round holes. Skill and competency are taken for granted. That's why most writers begin in the Class D leagues & work up, few break into the majors first, although it's always possible. But percentage is against you. And wise ball players usually play percentage rather than buck the averages.

This is something that most intellectuals find it hard to learn. Only the other day a writer for the more rarefied *Little and Experimental* magazines told me at considerable length how he could write for the *SEP* if he wanted to, but he would rather be seen dead than caught doing it. It has always been my ambition to observe such a writer at a bank cashing a check actually sent him by the *SEP*

The point of this is that writing for the *SEP* looks easy, but it isn't. And this is equally true of any other magazine, including the experimental magazines. To clinch his argument, the writer I have just mentioned in a rash moment told me that he had once sold a poem to one of the ultra quality literary publications. Now it is well recognized that one unit of anything does not set up a trend or form a trustworthy pattern if its supposed implication is projected into space. The writer, something of a scientist in his own vocational field, would be the first to admit this there, but apparently not in writing.

Moreover, the higher you work up in serious publication, the more you observe an ironical truism, namely that you do not simply write a given piece and then have it accepted or rejected. On the contrary you try to make it as near perfect as you can for a given editor, then you send it. And he says "This is fine. Now let's tailor it." Then begins the real work of underscoring, highlighting, emphasizing shades of meaning, and making it fit like the proverbial glove the needs of the particular editor and the well known interests of his readers. This is not formularizing it either, because what you're trying to achieve is not something trite and/or desiccated, but rather a living, exciting script that breathes originality within the limitations set by an experienced editor.

The readers will judge it by all that has appeared in past issues. They want to shout out "This is new, this is true, this is different!" Perhaps one of the highlights which you underscore is the implication to the ultimate consumer that you are offering him a special treat, something deliberately & provocatively off-trail. This is not easy to do until you have won the editor's provisional approval.

There is so much more, you see, than that surface conception of what you have tried so hard to do. There is the interplay between: (1) what you aim to achieve and what you actually have accomplished; (2) between what an editor would like to buy and what he thinks he ought to buy; (3) between his normal everyday policy and what shape this takes because of what his competitors are doing. In other words, there is the difference between tactics and overall strategy; between an original and imaginative move made as a part of one's offensive plans, and the sheer necessity born of defense, of keeping a magazine alive, or selling an article or story, or even a poem, because it keeps the wolf away from the door and maintains you in business as a writer.

Too many writers never write in clear, explicit terms for themselves the differences between considering writing as an avocation or a vocation. And it's got to be one or the other. It can't be both and leave you happy.

REWRITE

Published Quarterly by
WRITERS' COUNSEL SERVICE, 50 West St.,
Lunenburg, Mass.

FIND AND William E. Harris, **KEEP**
WRITE Elva Ray Harris, **AMERICA**
THE TRUTH Editors. **FREE**

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 50¢ per issue \$2.00 per year anywhere in the world. Copyright, Feb. 1957. Reproduction without permission from, or credit to the editors is forbidden.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Continuous delivery cannot be guaranteed unless you send us changes one month in advance. Full details, please.

PROMPT RENEWALS help us to give you a better magazine. Many subscribers renew for two or more years. It saves you time and money.

DUPLICATE SUBSCRIPTIONS: After the first we charge only \$1 per year for additional subscriptions mailed to a single address. Very useful for clubs, and note-takers.

Today writers face the greatest opportunity they have ever had for using their power with words for bold creative purposes.

TAX RELIEF FOR CITIZENS

A recent newspaper headline called for tax relief for certain corporations. The thing this country needs more than anything else, the kind of freedom Americans crave is freedom from reckless and uncontrolled spending of the people's capital by spendthrift politicians anxious to perpetuate themselves in public office at the expense of the voters. Everywhere one looks, on every governmental level, one sees larger and larger shares of the citizens' income and savings being wiped out by the bottomless maw of taxes. Always the cry is "how can we raise more money?" It is never "What about the taxpayer?" Capacity to pay, equality and fairness of a new tax is rarely considered. The thrift and sacrifices of generations are being ravaged and wasted in thoughtless accumulation of a debt no government, national, state or town and city can possibly pay.

This is no wholesale decrying of political parties and politicians. Rather of a system under which they operate. Many men are dedicated public servants, a few are statesmen of high principles and business ability. But governments today are run as no private business could possibly be managed. There is no relation between income and outgo. No ceiling, no check on the amount of the money in the bank. Only the willingness of the taxpayer to accept unresistingly the mounting burden. And more and more government on all levels is given the power to mortgage & also enforce collection of taxes however unfair, discriminatory and inequitable.

The first thing that needs to be done has the ring of obviousness about it. Put government on a business basis. Make those who spend public money as responsible about living within their income as private citizens. And this is not as hopeless a task as politicians like us to think. There are unforeseen emergencies in private lives. But in a more conservative day neighbors and community businesses, social agencies, etc., managed to cut tape and help out. Today, a paternal great white father in Washington desires his children to depend exclusively on him. And by the time money has been raised, poured down the tax drain and been permitted to dribble back to where it is needed, it costs seven times as much.

The second thing that needs to be done is to re-educate people, corporations, and social agencies that the best government does not hamstring its citizens by endless regulations, restrictions and crushing debt. It frees its citizens to live more fruitful and creative lives. It builds incentives, it encourages imaginative development of talents and courageous pioneering for public service leading towards more abundant living for all our citizens and fellow men.

The long, hard struggle for better conditions for labor and a less materialistic outlook by capital was necessary. But now management and labor must stop warring around a table. They must adopt a larger viewpoint & realize that what is best for all is surely best for them. In this air-minded age where horizons have been stretched, the greatest & most lasting advances have been made wherever people have learned to work together & "do better together what they could not do as well separately." The United Nations, cooperative enterprises, well managed, powerful mutual investment funds, pioneering investigative teams in the field of science, these are but a few of the romantic and colorful, yet valuable instances of the fruits of togetherness. Some have been carried on within the framework of government, business or great educational and social agencies.

The third thing that needs to be done has the ring of obviousness about it, too. But it has taken man ages of crawling progress to learn the lesson by which it can be accomplished. That is that a materialism that puts too great emphasis on possessions, and lack of faith in an infinite force outside one's self are the roots of all evil. The Russians profess to deride the Capitalist System. Yet both of these defects are cornerstones controlling the callous and conscienceless exploitation of people by the few who make up the Politburo. And capitalism despite all its evils in the past and present, has come nearer to this ideal that man has been reaching for down through the ages.

Yet we have our own politburo. Government that eats our savings & enslaves us in debt.

REWRITE

READ THIS AND PROFIT!

The article I have reprinted here below is going to shock a lot of writers, who assume they can write reasonably well. It will hit those especially who are interested in quality or literary writing. For many of these, I fear, like to use big words and abstractions, expecting their readers to be up to, or come up their intellectual level. Thus they automatically set themselves to write for a limited as against a mass readership. Yet no matter how seriously you write, or how serious your pretensions to be a literary writer, why should you limit unnecessarily your public? The greatest men and women in every walk of life or art have been simple, human beings. They could reach the hearts of folk in every land and at every level of culture.

I do necessarily agree with all that this writer states so dogmatically as all pervading truth. No

one wants to be a writer for a mass audience, and no other. A complete obedience to those least developed portions of your body, and character, can be degrading. A tendency in that direction will pull you down, and destroy an artist no matter how promising his gift. A dreamer reaches for the sky, and if his work is good, humanity will be attracted to him.

Nevertheless, the practical, realistic writer will see in this article, I think, a world of commonsense and professional experience. He will absorb it all, and use as much of it, let us say, as his subconscious tells him, after digesting it, applies to him. I can tell you truthfully there are many rejection factors listed and

explained here. As a publishing executive you are a salesman. It is your job to know what you have to sell. But do you know whether your publication is easy to read? Is it in "shirtsleeves" English? Is it as easy to read as the mass circulation media?

Here's a simple, easy way to find out. Here are 25 Points of Mass Readability which are helping many publishers simplify their reading content. Try them out on your publication.

Words

What kind does your publication use?

1. *Short simple words.* For easy reading, a sample of your publication's writing should average only 135 to 145 syllables per 100 words.

2. *One syllable words.* Are they your work-horse words? Do they carry the biggest load?

3. *Familiar words.* Test samples of your publication's writing. Use the *Thorndike Century Senior Dictionary*. At the end of many word definitions, you'll find numbers in italics. If no numeral appears, the word is beyond the first 20,000 commonest words. If there is a number, it shows you in which thousand "commonest" the word occurs.

4. *Personal words.* A simple way to give vigor to publication writing is to use plenty of personal words. Dull, drab articles become alive and interesting when you sprinkle in a generous supply of such words as you, girl, mother, policeman, waitress, Joe, baby, wife.

5. *Concrete words.* The most specialized and technical writing needs zest, color, reader-interest. Test your publication's language for concrete images and vivid word pictures that can make the reader, see, hear, smell, feel, or taste.

6. *Every word a work word.* You

will find a simple test convincing. Go through one issue of your publication. Cross out every unnecessary word, phrase, sentence, paragraph. The result will amaze you.

7. *Technical words.* Technical terms may be crystal clear to the user but utterly confusing to the mass audience. Even in technical publications there is opportunity to clarify the jargon.

Phrases

How forceful are phrases in your publication?

8. *Rubber-stamp phrases.* Test for trite phrases on every level. Spot checks will show where your writers are weak.

9. *Sparkle and freshness.* Give old phrases a new twist. Use concrete, specific phrases that convey word pictures.

10. *Figures of speech.* Test your publication for its storehouse of colorful new phrases. Build them into your publication's writing. Feed new ones in as old ones wear out from overwork.

11. *Intimate phrases.* Test for those simple phrases you use at your breakfast table, with friends, on the golf course.

Sentences

Are your sentences effective?

12. *Short sentences.* They are the life-blood of simple, easy-to-read writing. A good average sentence length is 14 words.

13. *Frequent use of very short sentences.* Even a one word sentence is good. It's forceful. Emphatic. Arresting. Do your writers use them?

14. *Active sentences and active verbs.* Test for passives. Eliminate them. Active verbs give action to any reading in your publication.

Paragraphs

Is there power in your paragraphs?

What this article says applies also to fiction. I have just finished reading some mass that violated the principles of brevity and clarity. As many fiction writers are aware, connectives are not essential in dialogue & fiction where the illusion and technique of the human voice are called into play. But a step-by-step sense of movement in the story is very necessary.

Therefore, long sentences and big, intellectual words are bad. The idea in fiction is to achieve easy visualization. So "seeing" words, sensory-stirring words, are what you want.

15. *Short, simple paragraphs.* For easy reading, paragraphs should average no more than 42 words.

16. *Very short paragraphs give variety and emphasis.* When long paragraphs are necessary, very short ones break the monotony and help keep the average length to 42 words or less.

17. *One-idea paragraphs.* Each paragraph in your publication should be built around a single idea.

18. *One-viewpoint paragraphs.* Each paragraph should stick to one viewpoint.

19. *The use of paragraphs for action, impact, and result.* Points of greatest emphasis in a paragraph are the beginning and end. Notice the words that open a sentence. Notice the words that close it. Do you feel the force of the fact, emotion, or idea?

Entire Article

Is the whole feature good writing?

20. *Specific purpose.* Does every feature, department, column or article in your publication have a specific purpose, a reason for taking space in your publication, a one-idea objective? Has it a practical reader service? A simple, direct, reader-interest appeal?

21. *Direct to one person, one reader, one human being.* Is every article, feature, story, department in your publication directed to one man, woman, or child? Circulation is individual. You build mass circulation by selling and retaining the individual.

22. *Right where the reader is.* Does every feature or story talk to each reader right where he is, in his own language, in his own field of interest.

23. *The presumptive or "supposing" factor.* Because your subscribers are intelligent, able, perhaps technically brilliant, don't take for granted that they will take the time and trouble to read any gobbledeygook your publication throws at them.

24. *One basic idea.* Test articles and features in your publication for "one-idea appeal."

25. *One viewpoint.* Do the features and stories in your publication have one viewpoint? Test your editorial content for stance or viewpoint. Is it the impersonal viewpoint of the news-writer? The "we" viewpoint? The "you" viewpoint? Or a confused hodge-podge?

Source: H. Phelps Gates, CM, *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Circulation Management, December, 1956

REWRITE

FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

THE POET'S WORKSHOP

The first poem for discussion is Mary Alden Campbell's:

AFTERWARD: ANSWERING THE INTERROGATORS

In Four Figures

"How?"

Cruelly. (With scythe; and then plow;
then with harrow.)

"When?"

Yesterday. (Already walled away from
today and tomorrow.)

"Why?"

Because. (So lay by your probes. That
which is gushing out is not
tears. It is blood from a
sore.)

"Where?"

Here. (But you cannot come in; no,
not even if you take off
your shoes. Go away now.
I am locking the door.)

Olive Boynton: A masterpiece; original, convincing, terse. The usually inane answer "Because" in this context sizzles with significance. "Sore" seems not quite the right word here. With the "Scythe" of the first figure, wouldn't "wound" be better in both sound and sense, even though not so original?

Lena Swan: "Blood from a sore" is precisely right in this tense, heart-gripping poem. It indicates something unhealed, something which has been there a long time, unforgiven, unforgivable.

Bessie H. Hartling: My first reading left me mystified. But it was intriguing. Finally I arrived at this interpretation: the questions indicate reporters after news. The veiled answers indicate the heart-breaking nature of this news to the one interviewed. The plow, scythe, and harrow, indicate sharp words of quarrels and incriminations. Figure two reveals the heart-breaking finality of the action which made the news. The anguish suffered is revealed by the comparison of tears to blood. "Here" is the final, self-accusing word. The door is closed and locked. No more need be said. Words skillfully used can convey volumes when tightly packed with emotion. This is something the ATLANTIC MONTHLY might use. It is too deep to be handled lightly. Many readers would not get the impact of e-

motion. Good material for Divorcees Anonymous! The title helps solve the mystery, but I suggest: "Afterward: The Saddest Answer!" or "Afterward: The Heart Knows!"

Madeline G. Salmon: I have read it several times, and find a rhythm in it; but, probably because of my ignorance of the literary allusions used, I have not the faintest notion of what the poem means.

Mabel Luce York: This ranks with the best of Advance Guard verse. I wouldn't think of offering a criticism nor suggesting a change. I pass my interpretation on to you.

This is a factual poem first, and second, inferential with a pervasive figure that can be either a force or a person; a poem to be interpreted by every reader in his own way; one carved in strength rather than in beauty. Its reportorial pattern of when, where, why, how, makes it seem more factual than it is.

Evil came into my field with a scythe, laid low my harvest, and, not satisfied with that vandalism, plowed and harrowed my beautiful acres. "When?" Yesterday. It came out of all my vibrant yesterdays and marked this one a dead yesterday, now sealed away. One reads between the lines that when evil is stronger than good, there is always a door, which can be closed for protection. "Why?" There is a break here. The person turns with a refusal to answer some question and says: "My reason for not answering is: just because. It is sacred to me. I will not tell, so lay aside your probes. You can't bleed my heart any more." "Where?" "Literally, in my home. Figuratively, in my soul. The door is closed and locked against all your evil. Get thee hence with your Scarlet Cloak and your hidden tail!" The title is not adequate. Perhaps: With Scarlet Cloak and Hidden Tail?

Julia Anna Cook: Surely I have the right to expect poetry to communicate an emotion! I assume this poet wishes to share with readers a strong emotional experience; but I am left with a feeling of bafflement. As "You cannot come in." And of course, the reader must be allowed to "come in" in order to participate in the drama. Until the poet will stop locking us out, and is willing to tell the story, it seems to me the reader is being teased.

Eunice C. Neely: Unusual, but really good. I like especially the first two answers. They may be terse; but that is the quality that gives them power. "Why?" is excellent; it sums up the feelings one does have when questioned about a thing that is too deep and personal. "Where?" is also good, but I wonder if it may not be a little too final. Sometimes bringing trouble out into the open eases the burden. This poem touches the heart.

Richard Ashman: (co-editor of New Orleans Poetry Journal) This poem is an experiment. The

REWRITE

test of an experiment is success. I feel that in figures three & four there is a lapse into prose. Here, I believe, we have neither adequate formal nor free verse. Further, I feel the parts in parentheses should remain within a single frame of reference. The poem doesn't give the reader a sense of unity. If "you" is to be said, it should be introduced at the beginning and be implicit throughout. In figure three, "so put aside your probes" might be better. Yet the poem has the very rare virtue of sincerity—no pretense.

Elva: My own feelings concerning this poem, are mixed. I find myself somewhat in agreement with everyone who commented. I feel as Madeline Salmon and Julia Cook that my entry into the poem is made unnecessarily difficult. I agree with Clive Boynton, Eunice Neely, and Bessie Hartling that the poem contains some good tight writing, and with Mabel Luce York that it's good because it has more than one meaning. I agree with Richard Ashman that it is not unified, but sincere.

In addition to the lack of unity in form, there is another lack of unity. The scythe is a destructive implement, but the plow and the harrow are not, unless misused, for instance, in a brutal killing. If the poet is on the witness stand, accused of murder, there would be no need for the interrogators to ask the question "How." The body would be surely the evidence of the "How".

If the terrible thing has happened to the poet, then the question "Why?" is out of order. Why should a person be asked why someone else has hurt him? Or if asked, the normal answer would be, "How should I know?"

The only way in which I can interpret this poem and make it unified is to consider that the person to whom this terrible thing happened has a sense of guilt, and feels he got just what he deserved, but does not want to talk about it. In that case the third figure would be in order. However, I cannot reconcile the plow and the harrow in this interpretation.

Part of the disunity in the poem, I think, lies in the fact that two cruelties are implied here. One, the cruelty of the act itself, and two, the cruelty of the interrogators. Which cruelty are we mainly dealing with in this poem? Or are we dealing with a compounded cruelty? Clearing up this point might help.

I feel that this poem could be made clearer without losing any of its strength, terseness, or emotional impact. It could then reach a much wider audience.

Now let us consider Mrs. Neely's poem. We owe her an apology for a misprint in the last issue. Line eleven appeared as "One streaks across the sky". The senior partner, Bill, who lays no claim to being a poet (or precision

typist. Senior ed.) added the "across". And Elva, who must have been nodding when proof-reading, did not catch it. Mrs. Neely apparently does better without collaboration. She says: "I omitted the word 'across' for 2 reasons. Because it made the line too long, but mainly because the word 'streak' brings to my mind that faint line of light that seems to follow a shooting star. I felt it might also picture the tail of a comet." Mrs. Neely says: "I am interested in line eleven comments." So we'll include them, even though they may not apply to the correct line.

STARS

By Eunice G. Neely

Some look blue
Some look white,
Some have a mellow glow;
One looks red,
A couple green
As they stage their evening show.

Sometimes they twinkle,
Sometimes they shine,
Or through the clouds they peep;
Once in a while
One streaks the sky
When little folks are asleep.

Marion Walker Fuller: The directness and simplicity of the language makes the message intelligible even to a rather young child. He recognizes the definite color adjectives. He has observed the action that the verbs twinkling and shining convey. The fifth line isn't musical to my ear. Instead of "a couple" how about "another"? It has a pleasanter sound, and one would not lose the feeling of quantity. Are there too many feet in line eleven? Mrs. Neely has grasped the imperative principle in writing for children: directness, simplicity, and the ability to paint a charming picture.

Ruth John: It reads well and shows Mrs. Neely knows her stars. My only criticism is that line eleven should read smoother.

Clive Boynton: The perfect rhymes and chanting rhythm would delight the small child. The poem would awaken the child to noticing the stars & their varied colors and forms. "Mellow" seems not to apply to stars. Since she is speaking of colors, why not "yellow", or even "golden"? Line six is lovely, but trite. Moreover, it is beyond the understanding of the poem's audience. I wonder if she might not get by that awkward eleventh line if she made some such change as this:

Gaily they twinkle,
Brightly they shine,
Often through clouds they peep;
Sometimes one streaks
Across the sky
When little folks are asleep.

RE-RITE

Bessie H. Hertling: I like the title, especially as it is not repeated in the poem itself. Rhythm is musical, delightfully variable, suggesting the dance and twinkle of the stars. Other verbs than "look" might be used for variation. Perhaps "One burns red," "Two beam green". I like "sometimes" in the second stanza, and would repeat it in the third line as the pattern was set in the first stanza. "Sometimes through clouds they peep." The last three lines can be made smoother.

Julia Anna Cook: Seems to be more the first impressions a poet might jot down, as material from which to create a poem. If Mrs. Neely picked a line-length and a meter, and went to work on these images, it should make a pleasing poem.

Hildegard Miller: The idea is good, clearly expressed in simple words. The poem has color and a sort of quiet whimsy. There are too many "a" and "m" sounds. "Streaks" seems harsh. I suggest it be replaced with a word that has a softer sound such as "skims". For lines 10 and eleven:

They seem to look,
So wide-awake,

Richard Ashman: Despite "poetic license" it seems to me that to say stars look blue, or white, or green, or red (unless they are artificial—not hinted here) is going too far. Both good verse and good poetry must aim at truth; and here we have arbitrary untruth. Perhaps the stars do have colors for the poet. If so, a good poet will make the reader believe it, at least temporarily! The inversion of word order in line nine is awkward, and will rarely pass. By taking thought, it really should be possible for a verse writer to avoid the very trite. The poem "Afterward" has content, which "Stars" lacks.

Madeline G. Selmon: A charming poem for children. The comments on colored stars are apt. Stars do have colors; and this is why I find a planetarium so inadequate. I get a cozy image of children sleeping while star-like meteors streak by their dark windows. Should stanza two be made more similar to stanza one in line length and rhythm?

Elva: Mr. Ashman seems to be in a minority concerning the coloring of stars. Billy's Brittanica Junior says the colors of stars are produced, as are the twinkles, by disturbances in the air between the stars and the earth.

I agree with Mr. Ashman that the inversion is awkward, but unfortunately, inversions do pass all too frequently in the children's magazines. It is regrettable, because in most cases inversions could be avoided if the poet were to work a little longer. By improving in craftsmanship, one should be able to eliminate all inversions, except for those used deliberately for artistic effect. And the results are always worth the effort.

To say that "Stars" lacks content would be to judge it out of its field. We do not judge a bird by the qualities of an animal. Both "Afterward" and "Stars" have content. But it is a different kind of content. There is a growing tendency among avant garde poets to believe that no poem is good unless it shocks a reader. This is a very narrow view. Poems that shock can be good, and good for us. But are we to ignore all the other emotions? Poems that project the less violent, but equally strong, emotions are particularly good for children. Most children are alert and curious. We don't need to shock them into thinking about things.

Concerning triteness: no one likes to hear overworked words and phrases. But put yourself in the shoes of children. What is it that makes a phrase trite? Isn't it because you have heard it too many times before? But what is trite to you at thirty or fifty was not trite to you at seven or eight. Try out on some little one an old phrase your mother used to use when you were a child, and watch the reaction. Trite? Not to him. He's never heard it before. Over-striving for originality can be more harmful in writing for children than it is in avant garde writing. We ought to achieve a balance in our poetry. Originality is important, but is not the end-all. I'd like to see better writing for children than they are now being offered in the magazines. Balanced writing. Let's give them emotional impact, music, rhythm, imagery, ideas served up in good craftsmanship. A few of the children's magazines, at least, are making an attempt to provide better writing. Let us help them get it!

Bessie Hertling's comment about "look" being too repetitive is good. "Two beam green", however, is unmusical, a tongue-twister almost. Thanks to Olive Boynton for pointing out the big trouble with line six: that the image is not within the understanding of very young children. Hildegard Miller's suggestion "They seem to look/So wide-awake" makes a good contrast. I applaud both Mrs. Neely's reasons for omitting the word "across". "One streaks the sky" presents a very vivid picture.

Next time we have two poems for discussion. Comment on either or both of them. But use a separate sheet for each. So I can send your letters on to each poet. That way the poet gets the benefit of comments I cannot spare room to print. Send in your poems on any subject or any form. Try to meet the deadline. But send them anyway. (We don't always meet it ourselves!)

The next deadline:

Remember, a comment on the other fellow's work gives you the right to submit a poem of your own. If you have no poem, send a criticism anyway for the benefit of a fellow poet. We pay a token \$1 for each poem used. Send return envelop if you want your poem back.

REWRITE

Marion Walker Fuller has had poems published in The Boston HERALD, New Voices, The Oregonian, and The VILLAGER. "Mandate" has been to The Christian Science MONITOR only.

MANDATE

By Marion Walker Fuller

Winds of the North,
Roll muffled drum!
Winds of the South,
More lightly strum,
Your aeolian harp!
Blow, west, your flute!
Sing, East, on sharp
Taut string! Salute
The feathered choir,
The greening bough,
The surging fire
Of Spring! Endow
This heart so spent
In vigil of a long,
Cold discontent
With melting song!

Lucy Cooper Summers, a mother of five, and a part-time child welfare worker, found time to write her first adult poem in 1955. Published in QUICKSILVER. Her poems have also been accepted by Midwest Chaparral, Poetry DIGEST, NEW ATHENEUM and SNOWY EGRET. "The Current" has not been to market. (She commented late on Eunice Neely's "Johnny Jump-Ups".)

THE CURRENT

By Lucy Cooper Summers

Water, stop gushing
And let my hands shape your spray
Into the memory of my first
Bouquet of rosebuds at sixteen!
All was tissue suaveness
And fragrant intoxication.
There was no wringing from words;
No forecast of these socks
I now rub clean.
Wide-eyed innocence
Wore no screen.
Water, stop gushing!
And slowly coax these hands
To other cares
They have yet to know
As I rinse away the suds.

SOME BOOKS FOR POETS

PATTERNED FLIGHT. Louis P. Genereux. Durham Chapbook XII. American Weave Press. \$1. Poetry award sponsored by REWRITE and AMERICAN WEAVE Magazines. A good representative chapbook. The 1956 winner.

THE LONELY GUEST. Kate Brackett. The Durham Chapbook XI (1955). One of the best volumes published in this series. The poems are simple, clear, yet have a rare quality of depth. Kate sells to the POST & other magazines.

POEMS THAT TOUCH THE HEART. Ed. A. L. Alexander. Hanover House. \$2.95. A new enlarged edition of a popular anthology. Edited by a radio personality who considers that the "urgent need of people is to find something to believe in, something that sustains in time of trial and crisis"...This book will do it for many, many people through its very popular favorites. Not always do they represent good craftsmanship, but the heart-touching, human elements are there.

THE GOLDEN QUILL ANTHOLOGY. Ed. George Abbe, Gustav Davidson, and Loring Williams. Golden Quill Press. \$4. The bonus book for members of the Book Club for Poetry. Poets included are all members of the Club, yet this book is in no sense of the word a vanity publication. They did not pay to get in & there is no poem in the book that has not passed a high test for quality of content and craftsmanship. Cullen Jones, Burnham Eaton, Kitty Parsons, May Winkler Goodman, Lawrence Lip-ton, Joseph Joel Keith, and many other fine poets are included.

INVITATION TO POETRY. Ed. with comments, by Lloyd Frankenberg. Doubleday & Co. \$6.75. "A round of poems from John Skelton to Dylan Thomas". Not a complete anthology, nor is it supposed to be representative. However, there's a broad choice of poems. The comments aren't final judgments on the poems, but do arouse one's interest.

DANCE WITHOUT SHOES. William Pillin. Golden Quill Press. \$2.50. This book begins the second series of the Book Club for Poetry. A good craftsman who writes both for the poet interested in disciplined techniques and the simpler reader craving warmth of imagery and meaning.

THE OLDEST APRIL. Sarah Litsey. The Golden Quill Press. \$2.50. Her third book of poems. Thoughtful, well done in conventional forms. There is music, and rhythm in a variety of interesting patterns, so that it does not become monotonous.

JUST AS WE GO TO PRESS

Helen Langworthy reports another teen age short story sold to CALLING ALL GIRLS. Previous stories to HORIZONS and FRIENDS. And two royalty checks in January: CLASSMATE and FRONT RANK.

And Winona Strachan working on the galley proofs of her first book.

The February-March issue of POETRY DIGEST John De Stefano, Box 177, Milldale, Conn., is just in. This magazine is continuing to im- achieving stature as a literary review. Poetry is still featured largely. John has retained the best features of the NEW REVIEW. A number of well known poets appear in it.

Think now about autumn subjects.

REWRITE

TIME TO MEDITATE

Here is a sad explanation why many people cannot write today. A friend wrote recently to us: "I lack time to even think. One needs a clear head and a few moments of silence to write."

There is a lot of truth in that, and more than is seen on the surface. A person cannot be stopped merely by adverse conditions, if he has something to say and the urge to express it. The difficulty today lies in complex lives, speeded up tempo, and cluttered minds. There is much to do, so much to say, read and discuss or decide about, our minds become confused and muddy with criss-crossed currents of ideas. There is no room anywhere for creative thinking.

One of the greatest needs today is to keep your mind clear and orderly. It is so easy, if you are not eternally on guard, to store a lot of worthless lumber and odds and ends of useless information and ideas in the mind. Good writing can only spring, like water bubbling up out of a spring, from a mind filled to bursting with compulsion to express a well digested thought and resulting emotional reaction and response to it.

There is one effective way to prepare the mind to be creative. Just as you are usually careful what you put into your stomach, so you should not try to swallow all the ideas and interests around you in this busy world of ours. Leave some for the next fellow. And learn to departmentalize your mind. Take up one idea at a time. Give your subconscious, the inner mechanism from which your creative work emanates, only one problem to solve at any one time. And if it indicates to you it is interested in one special idea, don't try to force another upon it.

This is especially important at night. If you clear your mind and fill it with material about what you wish to work on next day, you will discover that "subby" does a great deal better job for you while you sleep. You will wake feeling much fresher, more mentally alert and with a stronger urge to run to your desk and start writing. But don't forget during the day also to clear the tracks for what means the most to you. Meditate. Do it by sitting quietly in a quiet room if you can. Do it while you walk about on your daily rounds, or wash the dishes. But do it some time every day. Don't let your mind be a motor that constantly runs, but to no good purpose. Minds, like children, and so many, many adults, enjoy just idling, frittering. It is your job to know what you want yours to do. Discipline it.

You can make time by planning your hours. Get ready to write at a certain time. Don't just sit down and hope. If interruptions or physical condition prevent you from using a planned period, get routine tasks cleaned up.

Continue getting ready to be creative. And snatch the unexpected free time that comes, perhaps when you least expect it. For these arrive just as surely as do the bothersome, distracting surprise crises. Learn to overhear subby when it whispers this is the time to write, and this is what to write about. A chap who has learned to team with his subby and the great creative force that is outside us all, can double and triple his producing ability.

The secret is not to allow yourself to be rushed off your feet. Not to waste energy, not to worry or panic; do one thing at a time and then another, and another. To the best of your imaginative ability, capacity, and to the extent life permits you, choose well as to what you will do. First things first and beyond that rest content in each day's added accomplishments. Pray daily to God to allot you strength and a wise sense of direction. And remember that no one achieves absolute perfection in this sweepstakes!

NEWS FROM THE MARKET PLACE

HOUSEHOLD, John M. Carter, man. ed., 912 Kansas Ave., Topeka, Kansas, is a home-service magazine. "The free lance writer may act as our agent in finding new homes, remodelings, and decorating and gardening ideas as worthy subjects for us to photograph & publish. This is more of a discovery & reporting job than a writing one.

The best opportunity for the serious writer is in the department we call "family life." This includes child care, family travel, medical & health, and stories about interesting families. Anything that concerns the family group. Most of this is purchased from freelancers." Mr. Carter says that their series of vacation articles are generally assigned about two years ahead, arrangements made for the writer and his family to take a specific vacation trip and then do a story on it. The author must actually make the trip so as to get an authentic piece.

FACTS FORUM NEWS, a number of radio & tv programs and other community discussion activities have been unexpectedly discontinued. A nation-wide essay contest is scheduled to replace them.

BUILDERS, Raymond M. Veh, 3rd & Reilly Sts., Harrisburg, Pa., reported it is overstocked late in November. (This religious publication often carries a heavy inventory in our reportorial experience. So acceptable material must be unusually right to fill special needs, to win actual purchase.) Pays on Acc.

LIVING FOR YOUNG HOMEMAKERS, Wm. E. Hague., 575 Madison Ave., NYC 22, also stated as of the same date, that its inventory is full. A very exceptional piece or idea, again, might make the grade...Or you can make a note and try an overstocked market 3 months later.

NEWS OF INTEREST TO WRITERS

QUARTERLY REVIEW, Clarence R. Decker & Chas. Angoff, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Rutherford or Teaneck, N. J., is a new magazine using quality articles, short stories, poems etc. First issue scheduled for the Fall.

The Catholic firm of Sheed & Ward recently issued "Beginnings: Prose & Verse" which is the anthology of new writers selected in a contest sponsored by the book publishers.

Periodically we receive blanks for Houghton Mifflin Company's Literary Fellowships. Established in 1935, they have no dateline. Anyone may apply at any time. Address the publisher: 2 Park St., Boston 7, Mass.

SHOULD OUR SMALL MAGAZINES
BE TAKEN OUT OF BUSINESS?

The Magazine Publishers Association, of New York, has sent a warning note to publishers of magazines ament the threat of impending legislation in Washington in the next session of Congress, convening in January.

The postage rates on mailing magazines have in recent months been increased approximately 27%. Postmaster General Summerfield is proposing a further increase of 40%, a total of 67% within about three years. Advice from Washington indicates that the Summerfield proposal has a good chance of being enacted into law, unless there is a heavy public protest.

The situation presents a real danger to the small magazines of the nation. It could mean their annihilation. Scores of such magazines are virtually on a non-profit basis. Many of them have already succumbed. Any severe increase in costs will force many others out of business.

The proposed postal increases will fall heaviest on the small and better-rated magazines, which are sold largely on the subscription plan and sent to subscribers by mail. The so-called "popular" magazines are sold largely on newsstands, delivered by freight.

The reason given for the proposed increase in rates is to meet

the annual deficit in the operation of the Post Office Department.

The Hoover Commission says that if efficient business methods were applied to the operation of the Post Office Department it would save hundreds of millions of dollars every year. "It would save \$140 million at once," the Commission says, "if it would modernize its system." And that sum alone is more than the increase in rates would bring.

There is also the free, or "franked" mail, of which the Post Office handles annually more than 1 1/2 billion pieces. If this free mail were handled at the established rates for similar mail, it would add another 50 million to the credit side of the Post Office ledger. There seems little reason why government officials and personnel of government bureaus should be a privileged class, exempted from paying postage.

Perhaps readers of this and other magazines would like to express their opinions on the proposed additional burden on magazines that may be placed on top of already heavy postage increases. This can be done by writing kindly but firmly to their Senators and Representatives in Congress at Washington, and to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, to Vice President Richard Nixon, and, of course, to Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield.

This should be done promptly.

Sunshine Magazine

DCN'T SOAK THE TAX PAYERS TWICE!

Once again the Post Office Department has started urging that postal rates be raised. It is trying to save its face and that of the politicians. Postal rates are one place that politicians can make the people raise money without calling it taxes. It can also lessen the blame for the highest peacetime Federal budget ever sought.

But there are several reasons why this is a red herring. On two previous occasions an increase in postal rates has immediately been

offset by an inflationary raise in wages for postal employees, who have been seeking another raise! Let's be honest about this and not use the deficit as a screen. Second, the magazines are already being further penalized. Whenever a copy of a magazine has to be forwarded, instead of notifying the recipient or the publisher and collecting the usual 2¢ card rate, the Post Office sends the whole magazine copy back to the publisher—often with an illegible forwarding address, scribbled badly in smooched pencil. Result: the publisher may lose contact with a reader. At the very least he has to provide the subscriber with a fresh copy, a new wrapper and pay the Post Office the full mail costs for delivering the magazine three times!

There are other ways that the Post Office Department has reduced its services, yet it is asking for higher rates. And it should be repeated that a higher service charge is always disguised inflation. It would be better by far for Congress to leave the postage rates alone and trim the waste and unnecessary expenditures from the budget. Everyone agrees that taxes are too high. Yet politicians insist that the only reasonable thing is a "progress budget" at all levels. If an individual spends more than he takes in, or expends all of his "surplus" in spendthrift ways, he will end up in the poorhouse or in bankruptcy. How are governments any different from the individuals whom they tax? Let us start thinking straight for once in more than three thousand years or recorded history!

NEWS NOTES FOR WRITERS

First of the writers' conferences to send us a note: The State of Maine writers' Conference, Dan Kelly, Chairman, 37 Stone St., Augusta, Maine. August 21-23rd. No staff details yet, but the Conference family of the Kellys, Doris Marston, the Harold W. Gleasons, Louise Darcy, Elva & Bill Harris, Loring Williams, Sheldon Christian and others, who stand by to help writers generously.

Clark University has decided to discontinue its writers' conference. Although highly successful for two years in helping writers, the brevity of its schedule made it impossible to maintain it on a sound financial basis. From a personal angle Bill and Elva found it absorbed too much time from their teaching to direct it properly, even with an enthusiastic sharing of the load by Prof. Donald H. Letendre. We look forward to greater free time for our students this spring & summer.

The announced suspension of TOWN JOURNAL, as of the March issue, quickly followed the Crowell-Collier Pub. Company's decision suspending COLLIER'S and The WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION. A strange irony to throw millions of subscribers overboard! One wonders if present management will succeed in radio & tv.

REWRITE

REPORT FROM THE MARKET PLACE

The Poetry Society of America, Gustav Davidson, sec., 227 East 45th St., NYC 17, is a distinguished organization in which many of the leading poets hold membership. It meets 8 times yearly and publishes the PSA Bulletin (\$4 or 50¢ a copy to non-members). Two classes of membership: active and associate. Sizeable prizes are open to members & awarded annually.

The ROTARIAN, 1600 Ridge Ave., Evanston, Ill., has an attractively printed r. s. It includes a dozen reasons for rejection that give the writer some understanding of why a ms. missed.

TODAY'S LIVING, N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE, Robert H. Endicott, 230 West 41st St., NYC 36. An alert REWRITE reader noticed a marked discrepancy between this market's rejection and a report recently published in another writers' magazine. The report gave writers very definitely the impression TODAY'S LIVING is an open market. This is not so, as Mr. Endicott's letter to us clearly states:

"...Our only really major need at present is for what we consider lead articles. We seem able to get enough odds and ends to use as secondary articles and fillers without encouraging anyone to do anything especially, and directly for us.

"Our lead articles should have general interest, should be on subjects of importance to our readers, and should be local in some respect. They shouldn't be subjects equally suitable for a national publication because we want our readers to feel we are giving them something they don't find in national magazines.

"While we are not unresponsive to the free lance, we find it works better to have regular local people do our articles, because we can discuss them here in person with them and local people are in a better position to get material locally. We don't pay enough to make it worthwhile for a writer to come into the metropolitan area from a distance to do research for us.

"If you want to say that we prefer to have our pieces written by writers with whom it's possible to discuss the subject in person it might discourage some of your readers from distance too far away, and might encourage few who are nearby."

We have given you this rather lengthy and not too encouraging report, because we consider it is the kind of objective report the serious and practical writer wants. It does not lead you on; it tells you just what the chances are in general. It saves your time. If you feel you can compete in such a magazine, then you can go ahead with more confidence to study the market thoroughly.

SOME CURRENT PRIZE CONTESTS

Doubleday & Co., 375 Madison Ave., NYC 22 (Doubleday Canada, Ltd., 105 Bond St., Toronto 2, Ont., Canada) and William Collins, Sons & Co., 14 St. James Pl, London, S. W. 1, Eng., are offering \$10,000 for a novel by a Canadian, or by a non-Canadian on an essentially Canadian subject. Not limited to new authors. Entry blanks on request. Closes: April 1, 1958.

Editor, Yale Series of Younger Poets, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn. offers a free publication of a book of verse to some poet under forty, who has not been previously published in book form. Submit mss. Feb. 1 through March 1st. Address as above for the contest rules.

Poetry Contest Chart, Stella Weston Tuttle, Box 392, Miami 3, Fla. Published in Aug. and Dec., this the best poetry contest list that we know about, costs only \$2 per year. Very detailed information and good advice to aid you in making a good try.

In the December issue Stella Tuttle calls for reportorial help, the same as we do for REWRITE, from friendly readers and writers. It is impossible for any one organization to cover such a wide field. So send us the tip you run across. She and we will investigate and get full details. And also try to eliminate the time-wasters and frauds.

A practical example of how this can really save you time and money was a verse contest in Maine last year. The sponsor sounded all right. PCC listed it, REWRITE didn't but immediately both magazines received complaints. As a result of our dual investigations PCC, and many poets, readers of the two magazines were warned of the danger through personal correspondence. How much better it would have been, if a few friendly tips had helped to establish the background of sponsors for this contest earlier. You do a real service to all writers including yourself if you keep always on the alert and forward immediately any facts you may have, or practical experience. Miss Tuttle wants to help you.

American Meat Institute, 59 East Van Buren St., Chicago 5, Ill., offered in the December The Roundup to aid Western writers.

COLORADO WONDERLAND, Donald F. Davis, Box 51, Colorado Springs, Colo., suspended last autumn, missing the October issue. Subscribers since then are being notified that subscriptions are being placed in an escrow account. It is hoped to resume publication in June, and possibly with the April issue.

Mrs. Wilma Davis reported to me they hope to have definite news in the middle of January. REWRITE will catch this if it can.

Help us to keep you informed. Report market news you hear. We will investigate.

REWRITE

LOOK, DO YOU TELL A STORY, OR SHOW IT?

One of the commonest errors of strategy I notice in the mss. of inexperienced writers is the story that is told by the author instead of shown or lived by the characters. A habit so general I sometimes wonder if it's not the first misstep that all writers have to take before they learn to walk, in terms of writing fiction effectively. It's just as common today as it was more than 25 years ago, when I first began helping writers.

The basic purpose of all fiction is to set up the opportunity to write memorable scenes that reveal characters in action. The author tries to tell an exciting story. Or the story makes a significant comment on life. It is possible of course to combine these contrasting effects in one story. And also one author will become interested in and tends to emphasize different facets of the two objectives. But in the final analysis he can't escape from the simple fundamentals no matter whether he writes like Mickey Spillane or a quality author such as William Faulkner.

The place where the inexperienced writers fall down is in the opening. They have their MC sitting or standing, but inactive, thinking about the situation instead of plunging right into the midst of the problem. The MC thinks endlessly, never feels in his own emotions. The author has him put over important premises in his mind or mind's eye. The author really nudges the reader and outside the story world of illusion confides to him that it is this way, the facts are as follows. Meanwhile the story stands still, waits for the stage to be set.

I had a writer tell me recently that much as she would like to, she could not see any way to bring the hero into the story on P. 1 because she had to set up the premises which pulled the MC away from him. So she indulged in a long discursive scene between the MC and her aunt in which they discussed two opposing ways of life, two different philosophies.

It is true this prepared the reader as to why the MC and her lover thought differently. But it was a sociological essay instead of a story. The author was proving by dull, illustrative action what she thought about a girl like the heroine. It did not show in a dramatic scene either the dramatic problem, or how the MC felt about it. Simply because it was all intellectual analysis or rationalizing. There was no emotional reaction.

I explained to the author how easy it was to translate this prose piece of writing into dramatic writing. All she had to do was to develop a conflict scene instead of an agreeable mutual admiring by the two women of ideas they pretended to like. Suppose the MC, for example, realized that she liked her independence, but also that she was very mis-

erable when the hero is not around. Let us assume that her discomfiture is plainly apparent to the aunt, who thoroughly dislikes and disapproves of the hero because his way of life differs from her own. You can see a conflict scene will develop between the girl and her aunt. They will be on opposite sides instead of agreeing. The MC will be defending another way of life.

The point is that all of the facts needed by the author can now be brought out under a pressure of dramatic tension and building up suspense as to the outcome. It will be more interesting, and the story will be moving ahead instead of standing still.

And suppose, just to help ourselves a bit further, the hero drops by for a bit of afternoon tea. He and the aunt will naturally disagree, but the heroine may quixotically, with true feminine logic and guile, immediately resume her place beside her aunt, only to burst into tears and renewed longing, as soon as the hero departs. And follows him.

But in such a scene the characters acting in their own right, will not only be advancing the story, but, if the author knows what he is talking about, reveal the truth of an author's sensitive commentary on life. And the reader instead of yawning, will be participating and identifying himself with the MC. Thus the story will be providing entertainment and enabling the reader to enlarge his own experience in living. The story can also achieve an illusion of reality instead of being told by the author.

Another thing. The line of interest, most important thing in any type of writing, will start more quickly and be running through a story continuously. That is a strong incentive increasing the reader's urge to continue reading. You know, in these stories that are started by author-telling and the MC reflecting all over the lot, the story's line of interest does not actually start moving, and sometimes does not even appear till the third or fourth page!

One definition of a short story is that it is about a main character and a problem and shows that character involved with a group of other characters. If you have only a single character thinking about the problem she is not involved except in her imagination. One result of this is that there is no progress through Time and Space. The clock doesn't go, tick, there is no movement, illusion of life and feeling. The result is the story has an appearance of being a still life drawing.

Finally, all of this adds up to the failure of the story to "do" anything in an editor's mind. It has no action, no meaning & no purpose. Therefore, it is not "selling". It does not catch and hold the reader. Nor does it push the magazine or help to put over the sponsoring advertising.

REWRITE

YOU HAVEN'T GOT ANY GOOD IDEAS?

Here is a valuable suggestion for feature writers. Prepare a tabular view card in the following manner:

Basic Guide to Story Possibilities

Anniversaries Men Women Institutions

Activities " " "

Clubs Adult Youth Church

Hobbies Unusual Famous New

Landmarks Old Spectacular

Seasons Four Sports Areas

Special Days Christmas

This is only a rough outline. Each individual writer can make improvements to suit his interests. The idea is to think generally in an eye-stopper special category that almost any editor would be using to blockout future issues.

Then you start to break it up into successive local areas and specific channels of interest. A writer thus begins to arrive at individual stories he knows and could handle. And the successive steps, which could be many more than I have room for on a page, tend to raise the question is it newsworthy? Does it appeal to a wide number or special type and character of reader?

Such a chart could be developed on a single sheet of paper, a huge board or what-have-you. It could serve to get you thinking until you come up with one story, after which it would be discarded; or it could be used repeatedly. It is easily adaptable to fiction, or even verse. The main thing is (1) it gets writer creating ideas he can write, and (2) it forces him to slant, or market them in a merchandisable manner instead of just doing an abstraction.

I saw this idea worked out in CIRCULATION MANAGEMENT for camera men. It had been adapted by the editor from "1,000 Ideas for Better News Pictures," 1956, Iowa State College Press. I have further adapted it for my special purposes. You can develop a new functional use, I am sure—if you meditate a bit.

Too Busy?

GEORGE M. DOBSON

WHEN the farmer thinks he is too busy to read his agricultural journals thoroughly, it pays to stop a moment and consider these important points:

1. He might spend many hours in conversation with other farmers to gather even a small part of the information in a single hour of reading.

2. He might experiment for months to learn facts that are presented in full and accurate detail right in this present issue of his favorite magazine.

3. He might use up a considerable number of years to gain the experience that others eagerly share with him when he reads what they have written.

4. He might get along without realizing that the very equipment he needs for more efficient and profitable farming is already on the market at a fair price, and advertised right in the columns of the farmer's own magazine.

5. He might pass up the entertainment value in good reading, and not even recognize how enjoyable it can be to learn through regular study of the printed pages which the mailman brings to him so regularly and at low cost.

6. He might pass up the pleasure of having worthwhile topics to discuss with friends and neighbors and his family too, when he fails to broaden his outlook through learning what others are thinking and writing about these days.

Most of the trouble is not lack of time for reading. It's just that one may feel it isn't a duty like other farm tasks. However, setting aside a little time for keeping in touch with the world of agriculture through reading should be considered just as important as any part of the farmer's busy week. For in these occasional hours of reading, far more time will be saved through learning information, helps, hints and short cuts that lead to greater profit.

When you believe you're too busy to read, that is when you need the benefits of good reading more than ever! Get the habit, for it pays well. And no season could be better than the present one for beginning in earnest.

N. E. HOMESTEAD

Apply this to writers. Many of my editor friends complain at the lack of background reading and perspective sense reflected in most writers' mass. No solid depth.

A BATCH OF LAST MINUTE NEWS

League of Vermont Writers, Tennie G. Tous-saint, sec., RFD #3, St. Johnsbury, Vt. The annual Summer Institute will be held July 9 & 10th in the Student Lounge, University of Vermont, Burlington. Good speakers, lots of professional writers gather and there's much good talk and friendliness. And very inexpensive.

There's a Spring meeting, too, all day at the Dog Team Tavern, a few miles north of Middlebury, Vt. Saturday, March 23rd.

They publish a newsy little mimeo bulletin that offers interesting reading about their activities and writers. Costs about one buck or so to be on the list for it.

New England Writers' Conference Paul G. Sanderson, Jr., Suffield Academy, Suffield, Conn. The second annual session is scheduled, this year for a full week, starting Sunday, July 28 to Aug. 3rd.

The emphasis this year is to be on writers and readers gathering in an informal environment to exchange ideas on the "reception & communication of literature, and also the understanding of it." A series of discussion workshops in the morning and an informal lecture in the evening. Further details later.

Suffield is one of the loveliest New England towns I know and the Conference is to be housed on Academy Campus with the conferees living in the spandy new cottage dormitories some of us inspected as they were going up last year.

George Abbe, last year's director at Suffield, is doing an unusual thing. He is offering some prizes (\$25, \$15, \$10, Lawrence Holmes, ed. POETRY PUBLIC JUDGE) to poetry writers who best interpret any one of the poems which, written by George and republished by him, will appear in a forthcoming collection, "The Incandescent Beast." The interpretations with the poems and explanations, written by George himself are to appear in a volume planned to be published in the spring of 1958. Address: George Abbe, 75 Manor Rd, Springfield, Mass.

SCHOOL MUSICIAN, 28 East Jackson Blvd., Chicago 4, Ill. Mail has been returned: "Not There."

REWRITE

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

It is interesting to note that the new English prime minister has a background of three generations of booksellers and publishers. He himself was an active member of the Macmillan Company before the Second World War and has appeared many times on its lists as one of its authors on economics.

Samuel Gabriel Sons & Co., juvenile activity books and toy books, has been sold to a syndicate acting as toy sales representatives. There has been an almost complete turnover in the editorial department.

Anna Neigoff is the new editor of CHILDRENS ACTIVITIES, 1111 So. Webash Ave., Chicago. She comes from the supplementary textbook department of Benefic Press.

LITERARY CALENDAR, Estelle L. Trust, 166 Albany Ave., Shreveport, La. One of the most interesting of the Little magazines reaching my desk. The contents may not be outstanding but the publisher edits imaginatively. She encourages lively insight and the inquiring mind.

Phils. Regional Writers' Conference, Box 897, Pa. The 9th annual session will be notable for at least two reasons. It takes place two weeks earlier than usual. And it will be held at a new location, the Sylvania Hotel. The dates: June 5-7.

This is a favorite conference for Bill and Elva. Bill will again be Conference consultant, holding personal conferences & counseling as many writers as time permits. There is something for everybody in the wide program. It is smoothly run by an efficient and friendly committee. The contacts one makes, with editors and writers are valuable. The friendships are lasting. It is something we look forward to.

N. H. PROFILES, Box 900, Portsmouth, N.H., is using one historical article each month, written by its part-time assoc. ed., novelist, Shirley Barker. This naturally affects and limits to some extent the material that Paul E. Estaver accepts from free lance authors. On the other hand the Magazine is now using a few poems as boxed filler material, which breaks up the solid quality of printed pages in the back of the book. Also, NHP is copyrighted, thus protecting the author's subsidiary rights to some extent. Shirley told us at the New England Writers' Conference that she selects the verse. And in her spare time has been trying to go over files to reduce the overstocked inventory & speed up use of material, especially that accepted by a previous editorial board. This can improve conditions in any editorial office, so far as the free lance writer is concerned.

Writers can help an editor greatly by commenting & offering positive suggestions.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THIS?

This matter may seem academic to some, but sooner or later almost every writer, big or small, is apt to face it. What is the writer going to do when his stuff is resold, to the movies, tv, or the paper back publishers and "things are done to the script," as the saying is? Or credits are changed? A good many authors shrug their shoulders and say, "Oh, heck, I got paid well."

We at REWRITE do not belong to that school of thought. We have two ideas we hold about it strongly. (1) If a writer's name is used in connection with any ms., the public naturally associates some of the responsibility with him. Therefore, if the ms. is cheapened, distorted or misrepresented in a secondary medium, the author must bear some of the blame. (2) An author's by-line is a trademark that can build for him cumulative respect and a sense of integrity. Or it can be blemished over the years.

What I am saying is that if a writer does not tolerate evil, filth or insinuating innuendo in his personal life, he should never permit it to creep into work that he gets credit for. In a very real sense he is letting his public, large or small, down, if he evades the issue by saying, "Oh, well, they did it out in Hollywood. I had nothing to do with the production." (But it was his story or material.) That is one thing that is said about certain stars such as Joe E. Brown. No vulgarity or double entendre is ever associated with them. And that counts a lot among a good many spectators and readers. It is a rather nice thought, they say, that you can depend on so-and-so, that his stuff will always be clean, the way he wrote it or wanted it.

Paul Nathan in the PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY devoted most of his column to this matter recently. He pointed out that screen credits, and he might have added radio & tv credits, are becoming more prominent. Writers generally are looked up to with more respect. The Screen Writers' Guild, now part of Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, has worked hard for recognition.

Incidentally, Mr. Nathan discusses another problem, that of a writer who had screen credit withheld because he invoked the Fifth Amendment. His treatment of a story by Jessamyn West was used, but he was not allowed the credit. Mr. Nathan wonders if a writer's work should be cleared if the man himself is not. But if you pursue this line of thought far enough, "associations of guilt" could be later pinned on Miss West and the producer's brother merely because they worked on & revised the screenplay, but had no direct contact with the unwelcome writer. Fantastic? Possibly, but it shows just how tricky this whole matter of credit and professional integrity can become. It is well for writers, surely, to think straight and keep clean.

REWRITE

HERE AND THERE IN THE MARKET PLACE

The Charles W. Follett Award, Wilcox & Follett Co., 1000 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago 7, Ill. A total of \$2,000 offered for children's literature, prose or fiction. Contest closes annually July 1st. Write for folder.

PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, Robert J. Cadigan, Witherspoon Bldg., Phila 7, Pa., is primarily a news magazine of its denomination. It pays 2¢ a word and \$5 a picture on or before publication. Writers should certainly study it before submitting, because in addition to a special non-fiction slant and denominational emphasis, it has a number of special issues each year.

CHRISTIAN HERALD, Kenneth L. Wilson, man. ed., 27 East 39th St., NYC 16, includes the quarterly supplement, Protestant Church Administration and Equipment, C. Harry Atkinson, editor. Both Kenneth & Mr. Atkinson are very nice editors to work with. CH pays its contributors on the 15th of the month following acceptance. It also uses a check-list to indicate reasons for rejection.

KIWANIS, 520 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill., on its rejection slip wishes a writer good luck in marketing, and adds, a suggestion, "Let us hear from you again."

The Jan. 14 issue of PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY, a trade magazine, carried an excerpt from THE LAW OF LITERARY PROPERTY, Philip Wittenburg, to be published Feb. 25th. It covered "Fair Use, Quotation and Permission." Now this is a basic principle in writing from research. Everyone should be familiar with what it is possible to do, and what you cannot do.

Marie F. Rodell and Joan Daves have joined their literary agencies (Feb. 1st.) The address: 15 East 48th St., NYC 17. Miss Rodell was a mystery writer and editor, & also the author of "Mystery Fiction," an excellent textbook.

A Tip Regarding Agents. Advertising standards in the writers' magazines & some of the allied media have steadily deteriorated. THE WRITER alone carries no such advertising. I would suggest therefore, that you consult a copy of THE LITERARY MARKET PLACE available in some public libraries or from R. R. Bowker Co., 62 West 45th St., NYC 36.

The Society of Author's Representatives., 522 5th Ave., NYC 18, will also send a list of its members. These are not all of the reliable agents available. Most reputable literary agents do not advertise. The others, unfortunately, are always listed in the telephone book.

Therefore, the only way is to consult the screened lists mentioned above or join the National Writers' Club in Denver or the Authors' League in NYC. Or ask us. We are honest!

DO YOU UNDERSTAND GIMMICKS?

What is meant by the "gimmick" of a story? Lately that phrase has been used a lot. And is a good one, very meaningful, because you will discover if you analyze stories today, that many stories are built around a material device or circumstance out of which the plot grows. This is particularly true of the mystery story or other ingeniously plotted, action story.

I can do no better than illustrate by one specific story. The one I have selected is a nice little story entitled, "World Upside Down" by Charlotte Armstrong, a mystery writer by curious happenstance. It appeared in the Jan. 20th issue of THIS WEEK. It is about a little girl whose mother is considering remarrying. The theme is the girl's adjustment and it is rather sensitively handled.

The gimmick is the puddle of water, which collects on the cement deck surrounding the family swimming pool. Deedee discovers that for a little girl lying in the sun, it acts like a mirror opening up a secret topsy-turvy world. It is carefully planted early in the story, so that later when Deedee is shocked to see her mother kissing the new man in the mirror of the puddle, it is more than an ingenious theatrical device.

But what is even more important is the way the author uses the gimmick from thereon. It is simply a springboard by which the author reaches the sharp and moving scenes between Deedee and her mother and the new man. This whole business is similar to the old technical problems raised by the short short twist. The inexperienced writer builds his story around the terrific bang of the surprise that he carefully conceals until the end and then throws unexpectedly & unadroitly in the face of the reader. The professional plants that surprise in every line and scene of the story. Depending on suspense instead of shock surprise, he is primarily interested in story-values rather than the loud bang-bang. Twist therefore becomes simply a bonus, an inevitable outgrowth of the plot, the characterization and the real life situation. The story is never distorted and twisted for a theatrical effect at the end that seems wholly contrived and artificial, just tacked on at the end. People come before twists.

In the same manner the gimmick is used at beginning, the middle or the end of the story as a hard core or cornerstone. It may be the slick trick or ace-in-the-whole a writer uses to frame up his twist. But it's never the whole story. It is just the special bit of information, the extra premise that aids in making the story memorable and novel. The reader says to himself: "Shucks, I've swum, I've been around swimming pools, why haven't I seen a story in such a commonplace little gimmick?" Because he is not observant, thinks in terms of character shaped by plot.

REWRITE

HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Sales and acceptances reported since last issue:

Helen Small

Poem: SAT. EVE. POST.

Marjorie S. Scheuer

Poems: DAILY MEDITATION, C. S. MONITOR.

Rebecca Phillips

Articles: WAR CRY, C. S. MONITOR.

Shelton McKean

Meditation: SECRET PLACE.

Florence M. Davis

Stories: PERSONAL (and also INTIMATE) ROMANCES, EXTENSION, CATHOLIC HOME JOURNAL, AM. GIRL, TWELVE/FIFTEEN, TRAILS FOR JUNIORS, BUILDERS, VISION, etc.

Emily May Young

Poems: CONQUEST, WAR CRY, JUNIOR GRADE, HORIZONS, BLUE MOON, MOTHERS Magazine, BLUE RIVER PRESS, etc.

Shelton McKean (More)

Articles: JOURNAL OF LIFETIME LIVING and CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

Helen Langworthy

Articles: C. S. MONITOR, Grand Rapids PRESS, PARK MAINTENANCE, CALLING ALL GIRLS. (November issue of CAG carried both an article and one of Helen's stories!)

Alice Morse

Promotion: Alice is now in full charge, for the VALLEY NEWS, of all editorial material at the Canoga Park, Cal., office.

Ethel F. Blaisdell

Book: Her "God Caught an EEL" (Coward-McCann, 1954) was the Christmas selection for Doubleday's CIHU Club of International Books.

As we went to press the Canadian Parliament was considering a bill that would permit an arts council to encourage the development of the arts with scholarships, loans, etc. An idea discussed in the U. S. A. frill idea?

Market for Reading! Not many writers know that the Christian Science MONITOR buys for its Home Forum page short, interesting passages from books. For these it pays 25¢ following publication per running inch. Readers should be familiar with the page. They should also write to: Peter J. Henniker-Heston, editor, Home Forum Page, C. S. MONITOR, 1 Norway St., Boston 15, Mass., for a leaflet of instructions.

Padraic Colum will offer 4 poetry talks, starting Feb. 19th at the New School, 66 W. 12th St., NYC. A memorable experience!

NEWS AT WCS HOUSE

REWRITE comes to you later than it should. But for a very good reason. Elva and I have been freelancing. This practical experience helps us greatly to give you better counsel regarding your own writing. We are not just critics and teachers speaking from the side lines. We have felt the need for doing some writing for a long time.

Elva has sold poems to HIGHLIGHTS FOR CHILDREN, TEENS & other juvenile magazines. She has contributed to AMERICAN BEAVE and Leominster Public Library Bulletin. She has also given quite a number of her informal Poetry Programs, by which she furthers an interest in poetry and wins new readers for it.

Bill also has been selling feature articles to a number of magazines including PEN MONEY, CHILD SECURITY, and ST. ANTHONY'S MONTHLY. He contributed to POETRY DIGEST, sold a few fillers to the C. S. MONITOR, and wrote the guest editorial in the January issue of the Long Beach Writers Club QUILL POINTS. A longish article with pictures has just been accepted by CHRISTIAN HERALD. He has sold a number of juvenile short stories, too.

A recent innovation at WCS House is an extension telephone that permits Bill and Elva to carry on a two-way conversation & also hold a joint conference with students in search of quick and complex counsel. It was a pleasant distraction for Billy housed for nearly a month with a bad chest cold caught just as he finished a 3-months' tour of patrol duty at school. Meanwhile his steadily growing paper route continued to stretch. So Bill and Elva enjoyed to the full the rugged quality of this winter's blizzards!

HERE ARE SOME BARGAINS!

Duplicate Copies. As a service to writers clubs, schools, libraries, etc. REWRITE has had a special reduced rate for extra copies mailed to any subscriber's address. A subscription costs \$2. But additional copies, any number, cost only half-price (one year's subscription of \$1, or a minimum of 4 individual copies of selected issues.

Back Copies. Quite a few writers request an assortment of back copies. To the extent of our available over-run we can supply them at the rate of 5 issues, \$1 postpaid. They have practical articles.

Sample Copies. Because REWRITE accepts no advertising as a matter of principle, it has a standing Sample Copy Offer: 2 issues, 25¢

Surplus Good Books. To clear our shelves, we offer some duplicates, all mint condition.

FROM FACT TO FICTION, Ware, (\$3.00) \$1.50.
NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE, Uzzell, (\$3.00) 2.00.
THE WRITING TRADE, Reynolds, (\$2.50) 1.50.
ON BEING AN AUTHOR, Brittain (\$3.50) 1.50.

REWRITE

NEW BOOKS FOR WRITERS

THE SEA DREAMER. Gerard Jean-Aubry. Doubleday & Co. \$4.50. Labeled a "definitive biography," this book by Joseph Conrad's admiring friend and translator seems more a running narrative of his rather grim life & bitter struggle to be a successful writer. Contains much of interest for other writers.

YOUR CHILD'S READING TODAY. Josette Frank.. Doubleday & Co. \$3.95. Much practical experience and accumulated wisdom as well as extensive lists of books for various ages, by well known consultant. Saves you research.

COPYRIGHT LAW, Basic and Related Materials. Stanley Mothenburg. Clark Boardman Co. \$18. Here is a thorough, detailed discussion offered by a professional specialist, who has studied all aspects and has cited cases. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

ONE BASKET. Edna Ferber. Doubleday & Co. \$3.95. Thirty-one short stories by this famous and popular American writer. Covers a period of 19 years, the last written in 1942. A book to keep the author's name alive in the American reading public's mind. But is good to have these stories available with a short comment on each by Miss Ferber. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

SAY IT SAFELY. Paul P. Ashley. University of Washington Press. \$2.25. A brief but useful discussion of the legal limits in journalism and broadcasting. An experienced lawyer offers specific advice and direct quotes, and definition of the law. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

AN AD MAN AD-LIBS ON TV. Bob Foreman. Hastings House. \$4.50. A vice-president of Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc. speaks strongly for tv in a column he has written over a five year period for a trade paper, SPONSOR. He may seem prejudiced, but writers can get the feel of tv, and learn a lot from him.

DICTIONARY OF DICTOGRAPHY WITH EXPLANATION OF PRINCIPLES. Loyd C. Frederiksen. Pastime Press & Playtime Products. \$2.00. The idea behind this phonetic typewritten shorthand, which could save writers a lot of time, is undoubtedly good. The execution seems complicated and illogical. It needs working over.

PRIZE STORIES 1957. Ed. Paul Engel and Constance Urdang. Doubleday & Co. \$3.95. The O. Henry Awards for stories appearing Aug. '55 through June, 1956. Paul Engel has once more widened the field of his selections and has looked with favor on younger writers. Good!

THE AMERICAN SEX REVOLUTION. Pitirim A. Sorokin. Porter Sargent. \$3.50. One of the great sociologists has written a popular and non-technical, but discerning book on America's pre-occupation with sex. It's a book writers should study. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

NEW BOOKS OF GENERAL INTEREST

ALL OUT OF STEP. Gerard B. Lambert. Doubleday & Co. \$4.50. A personal narrative about an adventuresome life by the man who made a household name of Listerine, raced successfully in the international America Cup sailing races, and devised a pioneer low cost & profitable housing plan. Very readable.

A GENTLE KNIGHT, My Husband, Walter White.. Poppy Cannon. Hinehart & Co. \$3.95. A rather personal yet not too revealing memory of her life with the ex. secretary of the NAACP. Unless one knows the principals well, the unhappy problem of racial intermarriage fails to come through too well.

LIVE TO ENJOY THE MONEY YOU MAKE. Lelord Kordel. The World Publishing Co. \$2.50. Its title conceals the fact this book is about diet. Good ideas though, on relaxation, how to live more effectively and enjoy life.

A TEACHER IS A PERSON. Charles H. Wilson... Henry Holt & Co. \$3.75. A light and humorous book seeking to bring Education down to the everyday level, and make it human, practical and the joyous adventure it should be.

THIS HALLOWED GROUND. Bruce Catton. Doubleday. History (the Civil War) as it ought to be written, without the romance and the defensive coloring that glosses over dreadful mistakes. But somewhere the author lost his touch, fell down to the level of pedestrian writing. Is he trying to write too much too fast?

WILLA CATHER IN EUROPE. Introduction: George N. Kates. Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.00. Very early newspaper writings; hastily done. Interestingly foreshows later maturity. In the light of Miss Cather's commands to her literary executors one imagines she would have refused to permit such republication.

THE TEACHER'S TREASURE CHEST. Leo Duval. Prentice-Hall. \$4.95. A very valuable anthology, Sixty-four rare pieces of miscellaneous writing anyone in his right mind would not want to miss. Thoroughly enjoyable.

MORE YANKEE YARNS. Alton Hall Blackington.. Dodd, Mead & Co. \$3.50. A true story-teller widens his coverage of the unusual. Bill & Elva have found him and Alice good company.

CHOCOLATE SODA. Helen Miller Swift. Longmans, Green & Co. \$3.00. A second humorous, yet serious book for teen-agers about their problems and aspirations by a member of the ECS Family. Bill and Elva are happy over her steady forward progress. She has published a number of articles, too, in big slicks.

WORLD WIDE MONEY CONVERTER & TIPPING GUIDE. Doubleday & Co. \$1. Based on official rates, this book's tables save you head-aches. All kinds of other information & good advice.

REWRITE

NEWS FOR RELIGIOUS WRITERS

The Christian Authors' Guild Bulletin for January carried an excellent interview with our good friend, Kenneth L. Wilson, man. ed. of CHRISTIAN HERALD. He is quoted as saying that he thinks of writers as partners. He's backed this thought up by positive action. A CHRISTIAN HERALD check for \$200 has been received by the Christian Writing Center Building Fund, an outgrowth project of the Christian Writers' & Editors' Conference, at Green Lake, Wis. It is hoped to create a writers' colony retreat for writers eventually. The Fund is now approximately \$5,000.

Kenneth says that aside from a well "balanced book appealing to a variety of interests, we want material that excites emotion in the reader: either a longing for something, an anger about something, a warm glow of recognition at someone's experience, which can be transferred to their own ambitions or recollections." It may be added that this is what most editors want, and what they mean by requesting that a ms. "do something."

Ken adds: "You bought my first story" from a writer who has made a name for himself is to an editor practically the equivalent of: "Enter thou into the joy of the Lord." It has been well said that many editors are in reality thwarted writers. Only Ken, besides being an ordained minister, has written successfully for religious story papers, & thus has as an editor done more important revision and collaborative work with experienced writers. The CAG's COMPASS quotes a writer, who tells about a revision suggestion given by Ken on a rejection that resulted in a later sale.

Plans are being laid at Green Lake to develop a memorial to Margaret Lee Runbeck, a staff member at the Conference only shortly before her death. Those interested may help by addressing Mrs. Dorothy B. Retcliff, 3418 Lake Mendota Drive, Madison, Wis.

SOMETHING TO LOOK OUT FOR

You should be constantly on the alert for any changes in management. In the case of a magazine it means new policies. A writer is smart who unobtrusively shows an editor that he's very familiar with the letter's policies. It creates an atmosphere favorable to an acceptance instead of a rejection.

Similarly, writers' magazines, schools and advertising agents have changed hands. The policies and practices may improve or change radically for the worse. There are instances where ownership or part ownership are hidden from the public that buys correspondence courses, for example. This has been done and use of a well established name maintained—although in actual fact that personality may have long since retired or died. Therefore, signed endorsements by satisfied customers,

including specific statements about results obtained and sales made, may not apply to a new owner's ability to operate the services advertised. I have personal knowledge about writers whose names and pictures are used as glowing testimonials. As a reader of writers' magazines, I have observed that these puffs have been used for over 25 years. But I also know that some of these writers have studied with me. That in certain cases the sales mentioned in the puffs do not live up to the claims made about them. And the writers often confess to me they would not lend their names to any of the courses or services today.

The sad fact is though, they cannot force the school or service to stop using the endorsement because they sold all rights to a previous management. Some well known authors have been embarrassed by this kind of thing. This is one reason why a writer should very carefully weigh every recommendation he may make. And also should protect wherever possible the copyright on his early, and often immature pieces of writing. Years ago a very well known English novelist was distressed, I recall, by having an obscure publisher in England "shadow" one of his bestsellers with a reprint of an early indiscretion he tried hard to buy up and suppress. He couldn't prevent republication because the copyright had expired.

NEWS AND MARKET REPORTS

The P.E.N., "world association of the most distinguished book writers," in the words of Jim Putnam, general secretary at its NYC Center, has begun publishing a very interesting small monthly bulletin of its activities and those of its members.

FAITH TODAY, Peter V. K. Funk, 70 Elm St., New Canaan, Conn., uses a friendly, but non-committal rejection slip. It is inter-sectarian and uses prayers and poetry with definite slant toward developing faith and personal values leading to a more creative life. It is periodically over-stocked, but pays on acceptance. You'd be wise to study copies.

The New CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE/TOGETHER, 740 N. Rush St., Chicago 11, Ill., represents editorial division of this well known Methodist publication into two magazines for leaders, and families respectively. So, you need, of course, to familiarize yourself with the new set-ups. They use a combined rejection slip that contains eight rejection points an editor can check as causes for rejection.

Book publishing suffered a serious loss in the recent death of Tom Coward, president of Coward-McCann. A small firm, it has been an excellent one with many spectacular discoveries and successes. A very nice person, Tom was an able, creative publisher, about whom one never heard anything but the best.

Do you think & write 6 months ahead of dates?

REVOLUTION IN THE ARTS

One of the more curious phenomena of this generation is the topsy-turvy reversal of a scheme of values that is constantly changing in small ways, but fundamentally has endured for generations. In the box on this page the editor of *The Roundup*, official organ of the Western Writers of America, quotes jubilantly because his hope is father to a wish that if it is realized, would make all fiction writers more prosperous.

What both the editors concerned apparently have overlooked is that while fiction is temporarily obscured, it has not disappeared. Editors frightened by rising costs, lowered circulations and the inevitable emphasis on materialism that follows every world war, have tried to hedge. They have cried "service" in a "do-it-yourself" age and have fictionalized their articles. Some critics and psychologists have tried to explain the tangled emotions and lack of willingness to read fiction on a deteriorating ability to maintain attention as well as the increasing competition of the mechanical, mechanized entertainment media that a scientific age has cursed us with.

That is ridiculous. The movies, tv and radio have technical advantages over the stage & a good story told in book form. But both these media owe their loss of popularity largely (1) to having been priced out of a universal market; and (2) lack of first rate material. Proof of these facts comes clearly in the immense popularity of summer and off-Broadway theaters.

All the Theater has to do is to shake off the chains of ignominious slavery imposed upon it by labor unions and theatrical managers more interested in the enormous profits from real estate. Its appeal is yet strong for youngsters raised in an age of mere mechanical reproduction that never can compare favorably with the rich illusion of a human face and voice.

Nor can the best artificial & mechanized medium compare with the incomparable experience of achieving by reading the personal identification with a great human story that enlarges life and expands the imprisoning horizon lines of one's limited understanding of the great world in which we live.

There is something strangely parallel between what has happened in Hungary and what is being done to entertainment in the United States. The people of the Free World for eleven years have worried themselves sick over the "indoctrination" of little children, taught behind the Iron Curtain to hate that freedom they have never known. Our citizens lacked the perspicacity and faith to realize you cannot kill instinctive love of freedom or that violence can flare in two directions.

The same thing is beginning to ferment in this country. The movies have long deprived people of the right to see live shows by the simple expedient of buying up theaters, and closing them. "Sitting on them," is technically the clever colloquial phrase. Several generations of playgoers have grown up with only the permitted privilege of watching live actors perform at radio and tv broadcasts. Now tv is killing off its competition by the equally simple expedient of snatching the advertising income of the great and very popular big slicks.

Good News for Fictioneers!

Magazine editors flubbed the dub when they scuttled fiction in favor of articles . . .

Kay Campbell, in *Variety*, points out that the editorial brains which scuttled fiction in favor of "service" articles have finally tumbled to the fact that they flubbed the dub. Fiction, says Kay, is "coming back" just as soon as the editors can find the writers they drove into article-writing, television, Hollywood or whatever. Editors are currently caught short in their own former fallacious reasoning that the answer to television, their deadly rival for leisure time, was to load magazines with service articles and drop escapism and entertainment. Quel fantasy!

"Now the publishers and editors realize they must meet the test of entertaining rather than instructing readers. The circulation trail has passed how-to features and 'you, you and you' identification formula — how you, you and you can paint your own homes or build your own rock garden.

"It isn't just TV that's influenced the mags. Film studios have recently restored magazine rapture by buying quite a few short stories and novels out of the weeklies and monthlies. Magazines, generally, are also extensively tied-in, exploitation-wise, with Hollywood.

"Trend started a year ago and fiction editors have subsequently bought stories with one eye on possible film sales. Then, surveys revealed that an ever-increasing number of readers was interested primarily in escapist stories and the search for new and old fabulists began.

"A great many of the old short story deans have disappeared beyond the blue horizon and article-writing. 'Fictionists are hard to find,' Kay Bourne of *Cosmopolitan* complains, 'obviously discouraged with the years of narrowing markets'."

Good Stories will Sell

But does anyone in his right mind think that slick readers, without any qualms are going to merely flick on the tvs or run and buy one? Does anyone think that unlike the Hungarians, they are going to love their advertising masters and continue to buy their products indefinitely?

The Americans are an easy-going people. They have not been deprived of their freedom during so many centuries as European peoples. But the same inevitable curdling process will build up under the surface. Eventually it will boil over or explode. The boys who play with advertising revenues will wake up to find their fingers burned. Readers resent dictation.

Already there has been a reaction away from "do-it-all-by-yourself." Labor pressing hard for shorter work weeks, is not going to relish foregoing recreation and the fruits of leisure to work harder at home! A great many people are dissatisfied with the quality of entertainment supplied them by substitute mechanized media.

It will take only imagination and aggressive competition for editors and publishers to earn back old publics in the book & magazine fields. And, like the Hungarians, millions of younger readers who want real art.

REWRITE

GETTING THINGS DONE

Time to write is a very important element in the life of a writer. Much good writing, in the lives of many of us, has to be worked in during spare minutes in otherwise extraordinarily pre-empted hours. We all have hostages to fortune, and life, particularly as one gets older, does not run smoothly as one takes for granted that it does in youth. Therefore it is a wise writer who learns to make efficient use of his time.

It is obviously wise to prepare for those moments when one may be able to write. Also it is sensible to use that time to the best advantage. Do not waste it doing the everyday things that can be done in hours of low vitality. But one must recognize that youth has a higher and more sustained head of vitality. One has only to turn the throttle & the steam bubbles out. In children I notice how much of it blows off unused.

As you grow older you must conserve vitality and direct it, and often sustain it artificially. One factor that all serious authors will admit having experienced is that of finding the urge to write any given story. When you are young you are brash & full of enthusiasm. As age creeps on it is harder to summon the impelling mixture of wanting to write a certain piece and the confidence you can. Each job you do seems a more serious task surrounded by challenging dangers and risks of all kinds. You get a good job done, but you appreciate more the serious character of the struggle.

Hack writers and routine newspapermen enjoy boasting how they can just sit down and write. Actually, and in spite of professional competency, many of them speak from ignorance and insecurity. They do not know anything about good writing, that kind that is demanded by the higher pay markets or quality publications. There is a wide difference between teletype writing and a work of art. And that's not looking down one's nose at a craftsman able to communicate important and timely news expertly. Each type of writing, obviously, has its place in the world.

A conscientious and ambitious writer, who recognizes his problem, can juggle his way around it. For example by taking care to build up a pressure of excitement & enthusiasm for a subject, he can force his subconscious to take fire. A writer should never even under a seemingly favorable set-up hurry to start writing without an emotional urgency to write. "Subby" can tell every time, even if you can't or don't want to admit it, whether you have given it enough material to handle a given task. Good writing is always the product of knowledge plus enthusiasm. So prepare yourself.

Changing Your Address?

If you are planning to move within the next month please send us your new address now. Send both old and new address; send printed address label from your last copy. Also please notify your Postmaster. This is important to you. Allow five weeks for first copy to reach your new address.

THE BOOK CLUB FOR POETRY

Book Club for Poetry, Clarence E. Farrar, Francetown, N. H., has taken a forward step in publishing its first "Golden Quill anthology." (This is a bonus to members and sells for \$4.00 to other readers.) This is a type of anthology poets can approve and ought to support.

Although the BCP membership is still very small, the Club has issued books for several years and thus has provided an outlet for creditable poets. Its editors, George Abbe, Gustav Davidson, and Loring Williams, are a discriminating group of poets. George Abbe won this year's Shelley Memorial Award, and has just had a new novel accepted by Double day & Co. Loring Williams is editor of one of the older poetry magazines. For AMERICAN WEAVE has been published for over 20 years.

The Golden Quill Press which is a separate organization from the BCP, is a cooperative or subsidized press. But unlike the commercial presses of this type, its output is limited, and it gives a poet some returns on his money. There is no prestige or advantage in being published by a printing service which is a "publisher" in name only and willingly prints anything an author has the money for however incompetent and illiterate.

NEWS VIA THE MARKET PLACE

Pageant Press. Continuing what appears to be an across-the-board investigation of the subsidized press situation, the Federal Trade Commission has opened a complaint, charging Pageant Press, a wide series of counts, with misrepresentation.

The reason above all others for REWRITE's unswerving refusal to approve commercialized subsidy publishing is that in plain language the author pays twice to have his book published. Once when he makes payment prior to publication to the publisher. Again when the publisher pays him a "royalty" on every sale of every copy. No wonder the "publisher" can afford to pay a 40% royalty when already having written off his investment and having received a profit thereon, he furthermore gathers in 60% of the retail price except when a portion is discounted to a commercial bookseller (it is charged by the FTC that practically no copies of most subsidized books are sold in bookshops).

This reason advanced by REWRITE is implicit in the charges lodged by the FTC against Exposition and Pageant Press. It applies to all of the so-called vanity press firms that advertise widely their willingness to bet on new writers.

New Address: CHRISTIAN LIFE, 33 South Wacker Drive, Chicago 6, Ill.

REWRITE

CAN LITERARY CRITICISM HELP YOU?

Critics dismiss the hundreds of books the publishers send them for review with a cursory but definitive statement that this one is a good novel, that one very bad. And although their standards are pretty vague the reader does get a general idea of why their opinions vary. But what of the writer? Does he learn anything about what constitutes or separates the good novel from the bad one?

Have you when writing a novel tried to identify in your mind the qualities that are essential in a well written novel as opposed to those that mar a poorly written one? A writer can only create a good piece of writing by accident unless he has set up a specific set of standards for himself. Many of us, however well intentioned, rush in without any clear idea of what we are trying to do. The result is that the expert craftsman is expert more because he has thought about these matters and done some eliminating than because of unusual genius.

The first requirement of course is a good story. It is true that many of the greatest novels have been episodic. Their uniqueness has arisen from the fact that they gave the reader a tremendous canvas on which a writer painted a rich world of characters, made a whole epic era come alive. Such is "War & Peace" for example. Or many of the mammoth, vigorous novels of Dickens and others. And if this inventive, fast-moving skill in the narrative aspect of the novel that seems to be becoming increasingly scarce and difficult. More and more writers plod, or substitute a lusty or violent character in their scenes. They strive to shock their readers, not entertain them. They have lost ebullience and replace it with a mixture of cynicism, despair and insecurity.

This brings us to the second qualification in the outstanding novel. It is a double or two-fold one. Not only must the author document his story, i. e., be a good reporter. He must also be able to interpret and prove his understanding and compassion for people he creates. This implies an ability to control his material both externally and internally as well. In other words setting up the stock types and stereotyped scenes that many writers lean heavily upon, is not enough. You must make good your claim to being God. You must really create a little world of living people. It is not enough just to rough them in. You must touch them with the breath and spark of the infinite. However commonplace a humdrum story may seem, the reader's reaction must be: "This is not lifelike, life is like this!"

A third requirement in every good story is a line of interest that moves steadily forward throughout the narrative. And no one has ever denied that a story however much it creates an illusion of reality, is not bas-

ically artificial. It represents a man-made design. It is a composition, not life actually lived. It possesses an order, an emphasis and a precision that the more meandering and apparently meaningless flow of life does not manifest except on rare occasions. But the purpose of any art is not to depict the life it recreates slavishly. Rather to make its impact and meaning clear. Story-telling therefore, besides affording entertainment, acts as a separating and clarifying agent.

Life is a maze of many inter-woven strings whereas a story is only one, followed carefully from beginning to end. Its interest—maintained only so long as the author keeps to a sharpened point and increases his suspense, slackens immediately when the thread becomes too intricate. It is not for nothing that we teachers counsel the inexperienced, often faltering story-teller to select, eliminate and intensify. One of the great differences between the amateur script and that of the practiced professional is the barrenness of the latter.

The professional brings on stage only the characters he intends to use. He sets stage with only the bare essentials. His characters, like professional actors, only move about when the forward-moving action demands a response from them. Otherwise they remain invisible or "freeze". They never knowingly distract attention from the vital core of a story's appeal to the reader.

I am constantly amazed and bemused by the brevity of the professional writer. With a single adjective or at most two, he sets up a character. Usually, verbs and adverbs are more important to him than adjectives. Visually and through action he shows his characters doing, speaking, thinking & feeling. He rarely describes solely for descriptions sake. Even in the most prosaic moments of a story he uses conflict and dramatic action. Rarely straight narrative or the reportorial manner of the expert non-fictionist. His pictures are first hand whereas no matter how vivid the newsman's pictures may be, they're always second hand.

And that brings us to the final qualification of the born novelist. He is a creator, never a mere recorder, a news or feature reporter, or at his best a historian. He invests his tales with a sense of immediacy, a sense of their happening right here and now to the reader. He pulls the latter out of his armchair. There is no room for passive acceptance. The reader is told to "come with me." He must do his part. He must be the MC, and live the story himself. He experiences each & every agonized emotion that the MC does, yet retains the detachment to watch and thrill to life being lived at the top of its enchantment.

That is why the mechanical arts choose violence. They have not yet discovered magic.